

JOHN HOPE HOMES, BUILDING B-1
338 Spelman Lane (Leonard Street)
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2253-B

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGION
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
JOHN HOPE HOMES (PUBLIC HOUSING), BUILDING B-1

LOCATION: 338 Spelman Lane (originally Leonard Street)
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

USGS Southwest Atlanta Quadrangle (7.5'),
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
16.740040.3736760

SIGNIFICANCE: John Hope Homes was originally planned as an extension of University Homes - the first federally subsidized housing project for black residents in the United States. In its own right, it is significant as one of the first two projects to be constructed under the auspices of the Atlanta Housing Authority (created June 1938).

The project was named to honor John Hope, a prominent educator and community leader. Hope was instrumental in uniting the colleges that now comprise the Atlanta University System, for which he served as president from July 1929 until his death in February 1936. Hope was also a driving force in the negotiations for the financing and construction of both Techwood Homes (the first public housing in the nation, but reserved for white residents) and University Homes.

The principal Architects, *Burge and Stevens*, had recently completed Techwood Homes when they were awarded the contract for John Hope Homes. Both projects were good examples of the earliest conceptions of public housing, whereby the architects incorporated elements of the International style while utilizing the new technologies and materials of the era. The firm *Burge and Stevens*, established almost three quarters of a century ago, still operates under the name of *Stevens and Wilkinson of Georgia, Inc.*

DESCRIPTION: John Hope Homes is a vintage 1938 public housing development of 83 one and two story structures which originally provided 606 apartments for those in need of subsidized housing. Constructed in

three super blocks, the 47 flat and 36 gable roofed buildings form front and rear yard courts around the perimeter of each block preserving central areas for community recreation space. Structures and their associated yards vary greatly in size and configuration with respect to both the mix of apartments composing them and the position of streets around them.

Designed in the modern aesthetic of the International Style, John Hope Homes displays a shear stucco skin incorporating little surface modulation thereby highlighting the presence of its steel casement fenestration. Development of the front porch using a concrete overhang and steel pipe columns serves to add local identity to the dwellings while maintaining a simplicity continually subservient to both the individual building and greater community.

In the fifty-three years of its existence, continuing maintenance programs have greatly altered the appearance of John Hope Homes. Kitchens and electrical services were modified in the late 1970's while new stucco, exterior lighting, fencing and landscaping were added in the early 1980's. The middle and late 1980's saw the first major exterior renovations including replacement of asbestos containing roof material and the retrofit of 60% of the lead-paint - coated steel casement windows with aluminum double-hung units. Finally, in an attempt to better serve the public housing population, the Housing Authority undertook a series of unit conversions (combining 2 efficiency units to create 1 - 2BR unit) reducing the total apartment count from 606 to 587.

HISTORY:

Designed in 1938 and completed in 1940 as an extension of University Homes, John Hope Homes, due in large part to the effort of its namesake and first president of the Atlanta University System, became the first public housing project developed under the auspices of a newly formed Atlanta Housing Authority. Erected on land parceled from Creek Indian territories, the new community replaced some 425 dilapidated dwellings in a slum known then as "Beaver Slide" and provided the residents with modern utility services and state-of-the-art kitchen and bath facilities. Funded through federal sources to relieve the city's poor housing conditions, the Housing Authority was able to complete the construction for a cost of \$3,054,621.00 averaging approximately \$2,600.00 per apartment.

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Planned by the prominent Atlanta firm of *Burge and Stevens*, the project incorporated solutions from the best European precedents and applied them as best as site limitations and capital resources would allow. The community fared well for many years, but, as both inner city and broader sociological changes have occurred in parallel with limited resources for maintenance, John Hope Homes began to recall the inhospitable images of the slum that preceded it. As it happened before, a new interest in providing proper housing for a disadvantaged population has brought emphasis and federal allocations to this site for renewal of a distressed neighborhood and remediation of its connection to a growing city.

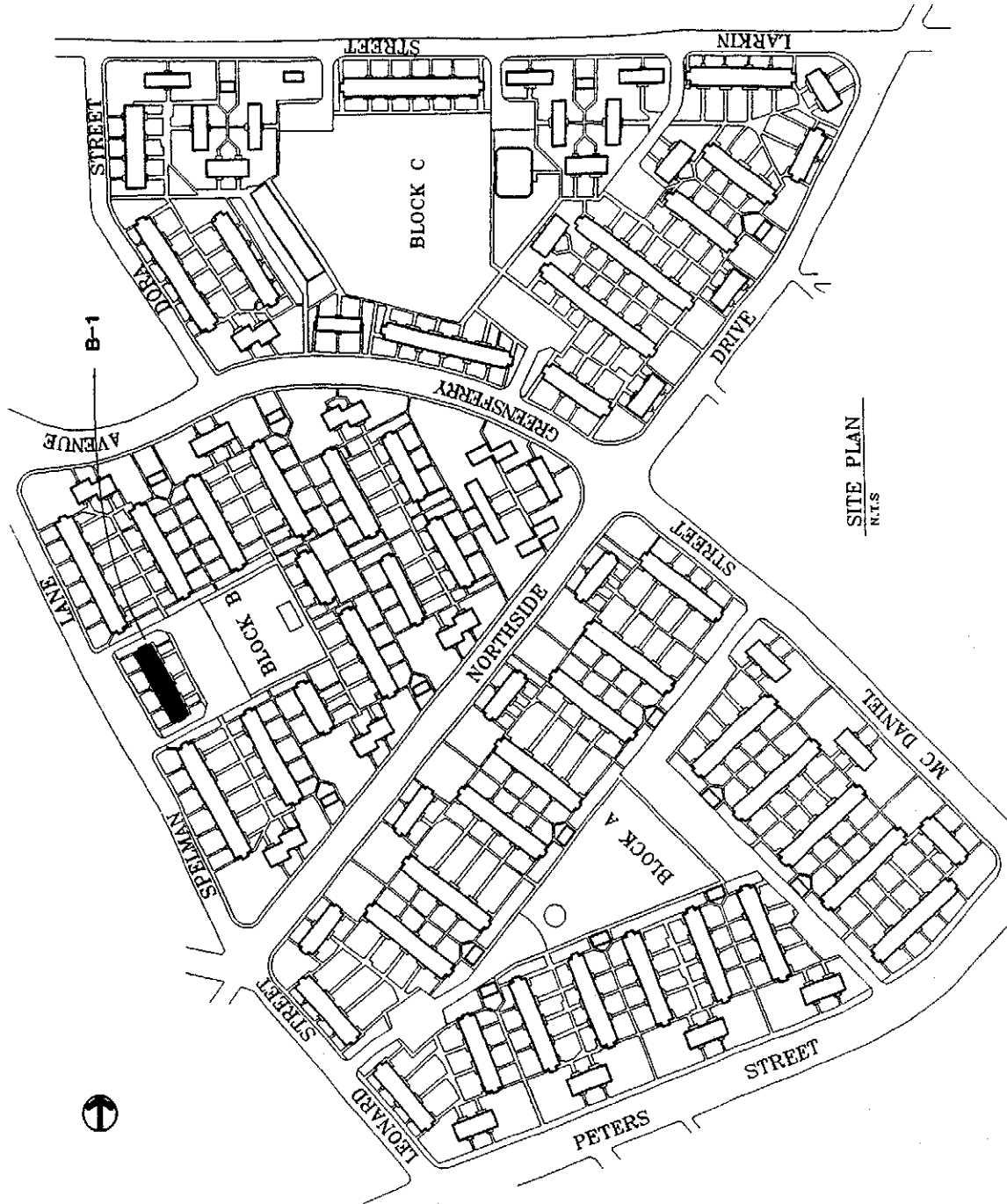
SOURCES:

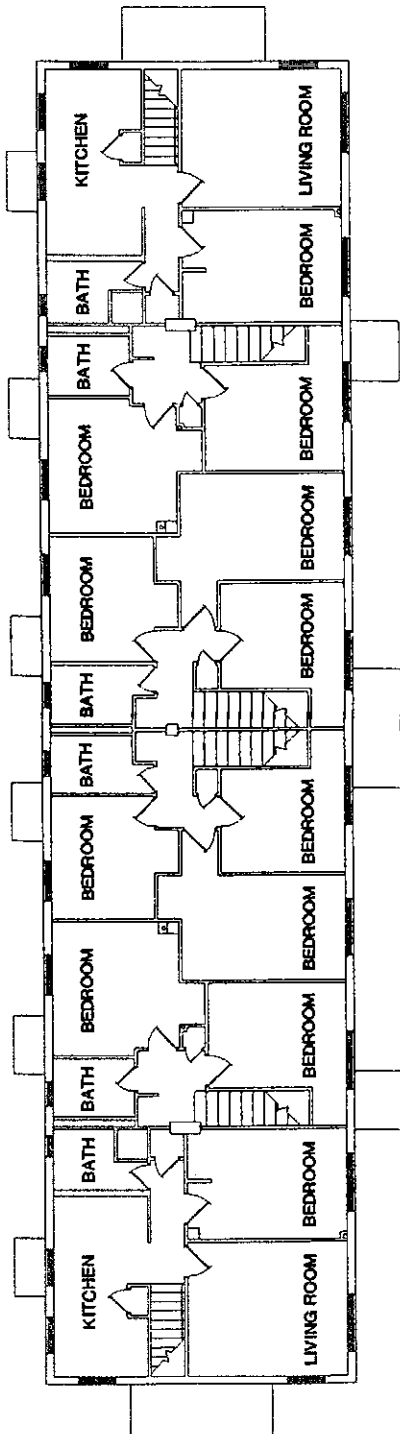
Epstein, Kyle F., and Virginia Horak - Photographs, Written Historic and Descriptive Data - HABS No. GA 2253. Warren Epstein & Associates, Architects, Inc., May 1993.

HISTORIAN:

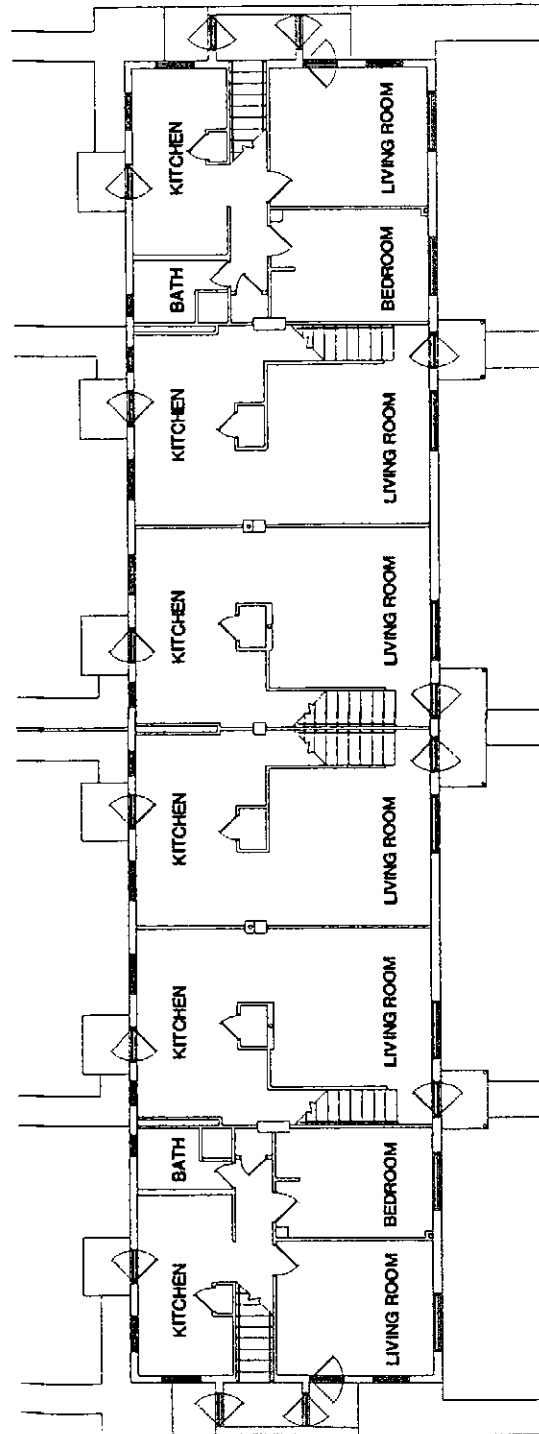
Kyle F. Epstein
Comprehensive Modernization of John Hope Homes, Project Designer
May 1993

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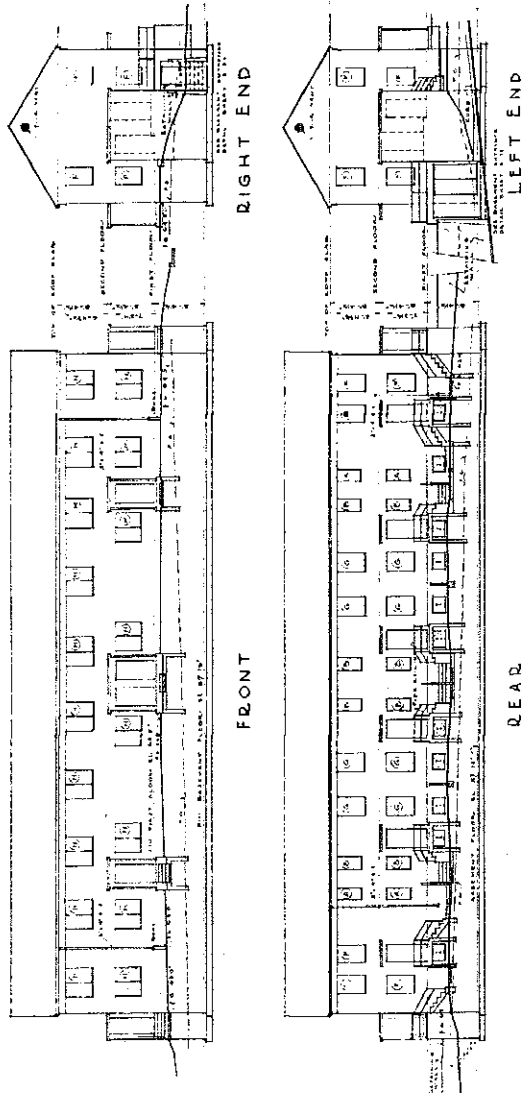




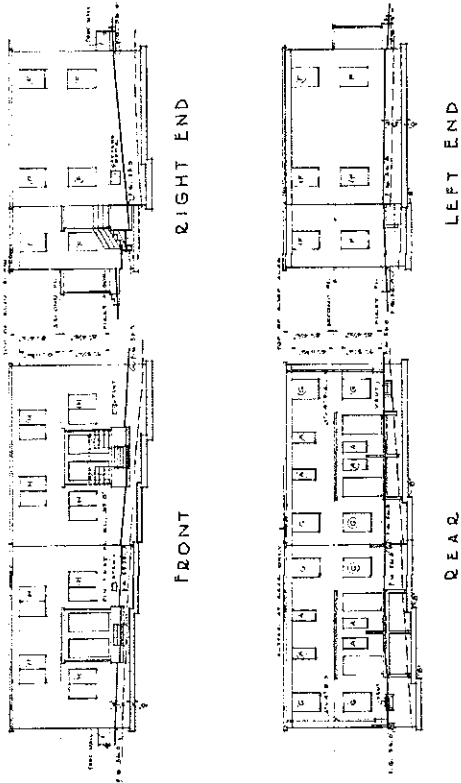
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
N.T.S.



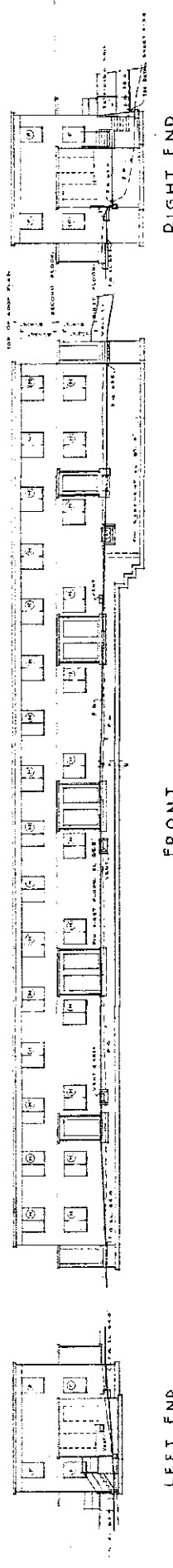
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
N.T.S.



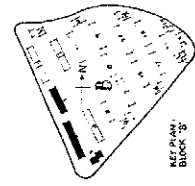
BUILDING NO.1 - 4C-4E - BLOCK B



BUILDING NO.3 - 4D - BLOCK B



BUILDING NO.2 - 4C-8E - BLOCK B



BLOCK B
NO.1 - 4C-4E
NO.2 - 4C-8E
NO.3 - 4D

JOHN HOPE HOMES ATLANTA, GEORGIA	
BURSE AND STEVENS - ARCHITECTS - ATLANTA, GA. HENRY J. TOOMER SHIRLEY AGNEW AND ASSOCIATES ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS ATLANTA, GEORGIA	
DRAWN BY A.E. - A.E.	CHECKED BY A.E. - A.E.
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"	DATE 10-1-57